1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

[p. 1]

I

INTRODUCTORY

I

COORG is a tiny, mountainous province in south India, bounded on the north and east by Mysore State, and on the west and south by the South Canara and Malabar Districts of Madras Presidency. Its greatest length, north to south, is sixty miles, and its greatest breadth, east to west, is forty miles. The total area is 1,593 square miles, of which 519 square miles constitute 'reserve forest'.

The Western Ghat mountains which run along the west coast of India from Gujerat to Cape Comorin pass through Coorg. They generally make a precipitous descent to the west while they slope more gradually to the east. The plateau of peninsular India generally slopes to the east, and most of the bigger south Indian rivers flow from west to east.

The main range of the Western Ghats skirts the southern and western frontier of Coorg. Starting from Brahmagiri Peak (5,276 feet) in the extreme south it runs in a north-westerly direction till Tala Kāvēri, where it turns east for a few miles before it turns north-west again. It proceeds in this direction for some distance and then runs due north till Pushpagiri Peak (5,260 feet).

Spurs strike out in all directions from the main range of the Western Ghats. In the south they form either a ramification of narrow-ridged hills, or subside into undulating slopes enclosing innumerable broad valleys in which rice is grown.

That part of the main range of the Western Ghats which runs east from Tala Kāvēri is called Bēngunāḍ Beṭṭa, and a high spur proceeds eastwards from it at the point it turns abruptly north-west. At Mercara this spur forks, the southern fork ending in the peak of Nūrokkal Beṭṭa, while the northern fork zigzags towards Fraserpēṭ in the east. The Nūrokkal spur continuing the Bēngunāḍ Beṭṭa is important, as, together with the Western Ghats running south-east from Tala Kāvēri, it constitutes the watershed of the upper basin of the Kāvēri river.

The western half of Coorg to the north of Mercara is a plateau

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the entire eastern fringe of Coorg have many cultural features in common with Mysore. The areas to the west of Bhāgamaṇḍla, and the north-western parts, have many cultural forms in common with South Canara, while the south-western fringe has many features in common with Malabar.

The quadrilateral formed by Mercara in the north, Siddāpur in the east, Śrīmangala in the south, and Bhāgamaṇḍla in the west has been called Coorg Proper by earlier writers. Coorg Proper is an area of greater homogeneity within Coorg, and formerly the bulk of Coorgs lived there. This area might be described as the core and centre of the culture of Coorgs.

When we speak of Mysore (or Kannaḍa) culture, or Malabar (or Malayāḷam) culture, or South Canara (or Tuḷu) culture, we are not thinking of entities unrelated to each other. Malayāḷam and Tuḷu cultures have certain features in common and, similarly, Tuḷu and Kannaḍa. Again, all three share some features. In fact, the whole of India constitutes, in a very broad sense, a single culture-area within which each linguistic area constitutes a region of greater cultural homogeneity. The recognition of the greater homogeneity of each linguistic area should not lead to the ignoring of the larger unity, and still less should it ignore the special connexions with some or all of the neighbouring areas.

A village in the Kannaḍa, Telugu, or Tamil country is a group of houses and huts huddled together in a confined space with fields and gardens stretching all round. But a different type of village prevails in Coorg Proper where Coorgs predominate: every Coorg house is built on its ancestral estate, and near it live the servants of the house, usually men of low caste, in huts of mud and bamboo with thatched roofs. On the other side of the hill or valley lives another Coorg joint family with its satellite families living close by. A few such houses and their dependent huts scattered over the hills and valleys are lumped together and called a village (*ūr*). An eastern plainsman used to seeing villages as close physical entities would be tempted at first to assert that there are no villages in Coorg Proper. Such a view, however, would be wrong. A village in Coorg Proper is real in the sense that its boundaries are known to elders, and the people of the village see themselves as a unity against other villages.

The members of a village have to co-operate on certain occasions such as weddings, funerals, festivals of the village-deity, harvest

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175 and northern parts of Coorg excluding Ēḷusāvirashīmé Hōbḷi, at present called Shanivārasanté Hōbḷi. This latter area was part of the territory ruled by the Kongāḷva Kings in the eleventh century. Both the Changāḷvas and Kongāḷvas were Jains by faith, and Changāḷva inscriptions have been found in Yeḍavanāḍ in the north and Beṭṭyetnāḍ in the south (see Map 3). It is probable that their territory included Tala Kāvēri as well.

The Chōḷas of the Tamil country defeated the Gangas in the beginning of the eleventh century, and they claim to have conquered Coorg as well. Both the Changāḷvas and Kongāḷvas now became feudatory to the Chōḷas.

The Hoysaḷas, a dynasty which rose to power in western Mysore after the fall of the Gangas, succeeded in the twelfth century in driving the Chōḷas out of Mysore. The Changāḷvas, who had accepted the overlordship of both the Gangas and Chōḷas, refused to accept the overlordship of the Hoysaḷas and claimed independence. Several battles took place between the two before the Hoysaḷas were able to establish their authority. These battles are important for us, for the first reference to Coorgs as a body occurs in an inscription referring to one of them. We find Coorgs fighting for their Changāḷva ruler against the invader from Mysore.

In 1145 the Hoysaḷa king Narasimha I slew the Changāḷva ruler in battle and captured his elephants, horses, gold, and jewels. Thereafter the Changāḷvas appear to have withdrawn into Coorg, for in 1174 Ballāḷa II sent his general Beṭṭarasa against them in Pālparé in Hattugaṭṭanāḍ in Kiggaṭnāḍ (see Map 3). Beṭṭarasa was victorious, and he built a town at Pālparé which he made his capital. But Pemma-Vīrappa, joined by Budigoṇḍéya Nandidēva, Udiyāditya of Kurchi (village), and others, 'the Koḍagas of all the *nāḍs*', marched against Pālparé and attacked Beṭṭarasa, who seems [101] to have got the worst of it at first, but was finally victorious. This is the earliest reference to Coorgs by name.[1]

The defeated Changāḷvas seem to have accepted the suzerainty of the Hoysaḷas. In 1252 the Hoysaḷa king Sōmēshwara visited them at Rāmanāthapura, when the Changāḷva capital was at Shrīrangapaṭṇa, south of the Kāvēri near Siddāpur. The Changāḷvas had now changed their faith from Jainism to Lingayāṭism, a popular sect devoted exclusively to the worship of Shiva, which arose in the Kannaḍa country in the twelfth century A.D.

[1] *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, new edition, Oxford, 1908, vol. xi, p. 10.

I:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

village has only one headman, a *nāḍ* might have an indefinite number varying from one to seven.

In Map 3 (*c.* 1850) Coorg is divided into 28 *nāḍs*, and this is the earliest map we have of Coorg. If the *nāḍ*-headmen existing today are related to the 28 *nāḍs* of Map 3, it will be found that 9 *nāḍs* have 1 *nāḍ*-headman each, 10 have 2 each, 3 have 3 each, 2 have 4 each, another 2 have 6 each, 1 has 5, and another 7. Only 1 of the 9 *nāḍs* having 1 *nāḍ*-headman each is in Coorg Proper, and 2 of the 10 *nāḍs* having 2 *nāḍ*-headmen each are in north Coorg. All the *nāḍs* which have more than 2 *nāḍ*-headmen each are in Coorg Proper. Out of a total of 70 *nāḍ*-headmen, 58 are in Coorg Proper and only 12 in north Coorg.

It has been mentioned earlier that Coorgs predominate in Coorg Proper, which more or less forms a distinct culture-area within Coorg. Most headmen are Coorgs, and it is well known that the few non-Coorgs who hold headmanship have done so by virtue of having bought the lands of *okkas* in whom headmanship was vested.[1]

It is then not unreasonable to conclude that *nāḍ*-headmen are indigenous only to Coorg Proper and that they have been extended to north Coorg by the Rājas. This is the reason why the *takka*-organization in north Coorg has such a formal appearance. Again, there are neither *sīmé-* (or *dēsha-*) *takkas*, the highest category of headmen, nor *ūr takkas*, in north Coorg. In this part of Coorg the headman of a village (*ūr*) is called *paṭēl* as he is in Mysore, and he is usually not a Coorg.

It is likely that the proliferation of *nāḍ*-headmen in Coorg Proper is due to the fact that every *okka* which achieved prominence in local affairs claimed headmanship. After the annexation of Coorg by the British, individuals occupying high positions in the administration and who had acquired wealth were able to call themselves headmen. This fact is very generally known to old Coorgs.

Like the village, the *nāḍ*, too, has an assembly consisting of the representatives of the various *okkas* in it; and it acts as a unit on certain occasions. An appeal lies from the decision of the village-assembly to the *nāḍ*-assembly.

[1] The lands of the two *sīmé*-headmen in Tāvunāḍ, Pōréyanḍa and Paruvanḍa, who were Coorgs, have now been bought by the Kuḍupajjé and Sūratalé *okkas* respectively, and the latter are immigrants from South Canara belonging to the caste of Gauḍas or peasants.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

returned to his village and gave a feast to the headmen and villagers. This completed his readmission to society.

The man who commits an offence against the moral code of the community is treated as an extremely impure person; and the purificatory rites which he performs before being readmitted to society are the same as those which first-grade mourners perform before attaining normal ritual status. An offence against the ethical code results in pollution, a fact which makes clear to everyone the nature of the offence. Such an offence also angers the ancestors and deities.

When a person was, however, guilty of a very great offence against the caste code, like adultery or fornication with someone belonging to a very low caste, the offender was irrevocably excommunicated. Moegling mentions[1] the case of a Coorg woman who was guilty of adultery with a man belonging to one of the Untouchable castes and who was consequently thrown out of the caste irrevocably. She was forced to live among Untouchables. Finally, both she and her Coorg husband, who was personally ready to forgive her, became converts to Christianity.

A person guilty of the offence mentioned above was considered as good as dead, and the rite of excommunication was called, appropriately enough '*kōḍi kittuvudu*' or 'tearing the cloth'. The offender and his relatives held a hemmed cloth, such as the one used by Coorgs for tying round the head, between them, and this was torn in two. Thereafter the offender ceased to exist for them. Even his son was not bound to maintain him while alive or perform funeral rites after his death.

XIV

A *nāḍ* is a bigger unit than a village, and it is usually more homogeneous culturally than a larger area which includes it and a few other *nāḍs*. The differences between *nāḍs* are considerable if we compare geographically extreme instances like Kiggaṭnāḍ and Nālknāḍ, but even if we take two neighbouring *nāḍs* they are bound to differ in certain respects, differences in matters of detail which might appear unimportant to the outsider, but which appear as extremely important to the inhabitants of the *nāḍs* in question. In fact, each *nāḍ* sees the points in which it differs from its neighbours

[1] Op. cit., pp. 213–14.

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

heavy jungle. A festival of a village-deity usually implies co-operation with the people of another village or *nāḍ*, or with certain castes or tribes living in different villages or *nāḍs*.

II

Village-deities are an All-India phenomenon. By this it is meant that the deities who are worshipped in villages in various parts of India have more or less the same character and attributes, and that the technique of propitiating them is broadly similar. These statements no doubt sound vague and general, but any attempt to make them more precise will have to take account of exceptions at every point.

While the phenomenon is broadly similar all over India, there are important regional variations. Generally speaking, within India, each region or district has a greater unity than the larger area of which it is a part. Inside peninsular India, for instance, each linguistic area represents an area of greater cultural homogeneity and social solidarity. But there are also cultural forms which are common to two or more linguistic areas. Malayāḷam and Tamil areas have certain cultural forms in common; and similarly Kannaḍa, Telugu, and Marāṭhi areas have some cultural forms in common. Within each linguistic area too there are differences: cultural forms present in the centre of a linguistic area might not be present in the peripheral regions or present only in an altered form. Geographical barriers also usually represent cultural barriers. For instance, cultural forms found in the Malabar littoral strip have great difficulty in spreading into the mainland of peninsular India. A country like Coorg, which lies at the periphery of three linguistic areas, Kannaḍa, Malayāḷam, and Tuḷu, has certain cultural forms in common with each of them.

Throughout peninsular India village-deities are represented by unhewn stones or by crude images of stone or wood. They are either housed in shrines which are usually not very elaborate, or simply embedded in the earth without any roof above them. A shrine dedicated to a village-deity is frequently found either at the foot of a tree or in the shade of a grove. Worship may or may not be offered daily at these shrines. There is no uniform rule applicable in this matter. Practice varies from village to village, and even from temple to temple: in some temples worship (*pūja*) is

1:Srinivas E-5 (1940-42)1952 AW5 Coorg AW5

of the world. Certain ritual and cultural forms are found widespread over peninsular India: the *tāḷi* or marriage badge tied by the groom to the bride is found everywhere except among Coorgs. A married woman wears a vermilion mark on her forehead, and only she is entitled to a necklace of tiny black beads and black bangles and to wear flowers in her hair. The cult of the village-deities too is broadly similar.[1]

Coorg Proper forms a 'Region' along with Malabar and South Canara. The three areas mentioned have many similar rites, beliefs, customs, and habits. But within this 'Region', Coorg Proper seems to have more in common with Malabar than with South Canara. The ritual forms which Coorg shares with Malabar and South Canara, and the deities worshipped by them, usually come under Regional Hinduism, while the ritual forms and deities shared in common with Kannaḍigas and Tamilians usually come under Peninsular Hinduism.

Local Hinduism has a more restricted 'spread' than Regional Hinduism. The people of a village or *nāḍ* share a great many ritual and cultural forms in common, though membership of a caste frequently cuts across these alinements in the case of the top and immigrant castes. Castes like the Baṇṇa, Paṇika, and Kaṇiya share certain ritual and cultural forms with not only their counterparts in Malabar but with all Malayāḷīs. Similarly with castes like the Poleyas and Mēdas who are immigrants from the Kannaḍa country. The length of the period of residence of an immigrant caste, and its position in the caste system, are factors which influence the extent to which it has preserved its traditional culture.

The River Kāvēri is a manifestation of Pārvati, the wife of Shiva, and the devout refer to it as Mother Kāvēri in certain contexts. Coorgs regard the Kāvēri as their patron goddess: the Kāvēri Myth associates the river specially with Coorgs. Coorg women pleat their saris at the back instead of in the front as in the rest of India, and this feature of their dress is attributed in the Myth to the force of the floods which pushed the pleats of the assembled Coorg women to the back. This happened when Pārvati first assumed the form of a river, and Coorgs, men and women, were waiting for their patron goddess to appear at Balmuri, a few miles from the source.

Regional Hinduism often contains some Sanskritic elements, in which case it directly stresses Regional ties and, indirectly, All-India

[1] [THROUGHOUT PENINSULAR INDIA -- ANALYST]

2:Emeneau L-5 (1936-1937) 1938
AW5 Coorg AW5

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ARTICLE No. 4.

Kinship and marriage among the Coorgs.[1]

By M. B. EMENEAU.

(*Communicated by Dr. B. S. Guha.*)

The Coorgs are an endogamous community of about 40,000 people who form approximately a quarter of the population of the province of Coorg, which lies in the mountains of western South India between Mysore State and British Malabar. They were originally the warrior owners of this tract and formed, and still form, the highest community in the social scale there (barring the few Brahmans who live in the province). It is doubtful how far they can be considered a caste in any strict Indian sense of the word, for they resolutely refuse to accept the ministrations of the Brahmans in any of their rites. No accurate ethnological account of these people has yet appeared. This paper gives a description of the marriage rites and the kinship system of those Coorgs who live in the central portion of the province, i.e. in Mercara and Virajpet and the district between these two towns and in Nalknad to the west; how far, if at all, the northern and southern extremities of the province present differences of detail is not known.

Kinship organization among the Coorgs takes the form essentially of father-sibs. Each sib (called oka) is marked as such by its name, which is borne by each member as his or her first name. All land is owned ideally, and a great part of it actually, by the sib as such and not by the individual; departures from this ownership system, whereby an individual by his own initiative or good fortune and without depending on the sib property acquires property which he holds as an individual, do not affect his position with regard to the sib property nor do they give the other sib-members a claim upon his individual property. In other words, individual ownership of land is an excrescence upon the traditional sib-ownership. It is the sib, moreover, that

[1] This paper represents part of the work done in 1936-37 during my tenure of a grant from the Penrose Fund of the American Philosophical Society. The phonetic writing used is in general that of the IPA. ə is the back, mid, unrounded vowel; c and j are palatal affricates; y is practically the English y. I write a subscript n at the end of a word to denote that the whole word is nasalized; e.g. in maːvn, both the vowels and v are nasalized. The nasalization is best evaluated phonemically as a feature of the whole word and not of any separate vocalic or consonantal phoneme. When a suffix is added or the word becomes a member of a compound (e.g. in tammaː viⁿ), the nasalization does not extend beyond the limits of the simplex.

[P.1]

COORG TRIBES AND CASTES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

COORG is a small British Province perched on the slopes of the Western Ghats. It has an area of about 1,593 square miles of which the reserved forests occupy about 519 square miles. It is bounded on the north and east by the Hassan and Mysore districts; and on the south and west by the Malabar and South Canara districts of the Madras Presidency. It is an extremely hilly country and is situated on the summits and slopes of the Western Ghats. Its maximum length is about 60 miles from north to south, and maximum breadth about 60 miles east to west. The name of Coorg is an anglicized corruption of the word *Kodagu*. It is said to be derived from the Canarese term *Kodagu* meaning 'steep' or 'hilly'. The people are called *Kodagas*. In the Coorg language, the country is Kodagu and the people Kodavas.

Natural Features—Mountains and Their Formations

The main range of the Western Ghats extends from Subramania in the north-west to the western point of the Brahmagiri in the south for a distance of over 60 miles. From this backbone several long and elongated ridges branch off from east to west. The grand mountain mass of Subramania runs to a height of 5,625 feet above sea level. Among the many

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CHAPTER VII

COORG

101 174 COORG was primarily inhabited by two distinct communities, the Yeravas and the Coorgs. The Yeravas are the modern representatives of the original inhabitants of Coorg who retired to the hills before the southward march of the Aryans and other communities and sought asylum there from aggressive invaders. At a later time, the Coorgs found in the jungles the means of satisfying their hunting propensities while the narrow passes afforded ample scope for their highly developed instincts to carry on their predatory excursions into the country of their wealthier and less warlike neighbours. Even now their fighting and sporting qualities reveal themselves in their socio-religious ceremonies. Their peculiar features are the product of their environment which stimulated a special type of culture among them. The hilly character of the country shielded them from aggression and conquest.

Origin and Early History

141 174 Sir Thomas Holland describes the Coorgs as the finest race without any exception in Southern India and considers them as even superior to the Brahmans in respect of skin colour, stature and prominence of the nose. They are taller than the Yeravas, have a finer nose, and have a larger head with a distinct tendency towards brachycephalism. Their average cephalic index is 80.6. Dr. Hutton states that " it appears to be a much simpler and more satisfactory view to regard the brachycephalic stock as preceding the Aryans. We may suppose them to have entered into the Indus Valley during the Mohenjo Daru period and to have extended down to the west coast as far as Coorg forming the physical basis of several of the brachycephalic or mesatocephalic castes of Western India."

174 Coorg inscriptions hardly throw any light on the early history of the Coorgs. They show that the province was successively connected with the Ganga dynasty, the Hoysala kings, the Nayaks of Belur, and the Lingayat Rajas of Coorg, as also with those of the Bednur family. It is said that new settlers must have been introduced into the province under various governments. This conjecture is supported by the Kaveri Purana in its account of Matsyadesa, the Puranic name of Coorg. The Coorg Rajas were themselves aliens to the country and were Lingayats, while the Coorgs were the followers of ancestor-worship. They were the most numerous in the north-west of the province, where they were closely allied to the Mysoreans. In Padinalkanad, the Malayalam element was predominant. Wynad which once formed part of Coorg must have afford-

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CHAPTER XI

AMMA COORG

793
101
[162] THE Amma Coorgs belong to the indigenous priesthood of Coorg. They
[776] numbered 666 in the Census of 1931, 336 being males and 330 females. Their common name is Amma Kodagas, which would naturally signify Coorgs devoted to the worship of Amma or the goddess of the chief river of the
173 country, the Cauvery. The Brahmans invented a mythical origin which is not in accord with the Cauvery Purana.

As reward for his austerities the sage Kavera was blessed with a daughter, Kaveri, who was proposed to be given in marriage to Agastya, another sage who resided on the Brahmagiris. Kaveri did not accept the proposal. She assumed the shape of a river and fled from the mountain. Agastya in hot pursuit overtook her at Kadianad and persuaded her to submit their dispute to the arbitration of their friends. They called three families of Amma Kodagas and six of Coorgs. The former sided with Agastya and the latter with Kaveri. The Amma Kodagas decided that Kaveri should not be allowed to go. The Coorgs said that a woman should not be forced to marry against her will. This provoked Agastya, who pronounced a curse that the generation of Coorgs should become less, that their women should not tie their garments in front, that the sown rice should not grow, and that their cows should not give milk. But Kaveri Amma who was the patroness of the Coorgs counteracted the curse as well as she could, and said, "The Coorgs shall increase, but the Amma Coorgs decrease, the Coorg women shall tie their garments behind; the sown paddy shall be transplanted, the cows shall be milked after the calves have drunk". So saying, she tried to escape and on being held by Agastya by the border of her garment, she turned to the right and flowed
[778] rapidly away. Hence the place where this occurred is called Balamuri (turn-
[788] ing to the right). A linga was erected at the spot by the Brahmans. It is
485 yearly visited in the month of *November* at the time of the Kaveri feast by Coorgs and others, who bathe in the river. Dodda Vira Rajendrar built here a rest-house, which, though built a century ago, is in tolerable preservation. Nothing more is known about the real history of the Amma Coorgs,
174 but a few facts may be given as evidence that they are the remains of an
793 ancient priesthood.

101 The Amma Coorgs observe in common with the Coorgs the great fes-
793 tivals of the country, and act as priests. They dress like Coorgs and at the
[796] same time wear the holy thread. It seems that they inclined towards the

professed patronage of the Brahmans and that they gradually dropped into brahmanical habits of life and thought. A good many now wear the holy thread, and all profess to abstain from ment and fermented liquors. The return to Brahman initiation and dress was brought about by a Haviga Brahman whose family exercised spiritual influence over the Amma Kodagas. They are still unlettered. There is a tradition current among them that in former times one half of Coorg belonged to the Ammas, and the rest to the Coorgs. The Ammas by virtue of their priesthood held their land free of rent. Their lands are even now very lightly taxed.

Internal Structure

The Amma Coorgs form a homogeneous community. There are two gotras among them, the Baradwaja gotra and Viswamitra gotra. They marry within the same gotra.

Marriage Customs and Ceremonies

The Amma Coorgs do not intermarry with the Coorgs, but the separation may be of recent origin. Marriage settlement is made only after the agreement of horoscopes. The young man's father, uncle, and other close relations assemble, when coconuts, plantains, and betel leaves are handed to the bride in token of settlement. The auspicious day for celebration is fixed to send invitations to the relatives on both sides. The dress and ornaments to be given to the bride are also settled. The preliminary formalities that are gone through are :—

1. The boy's party going to the house of the bride.
2. Their welcome with refreshments.
3. Nischithambulam.

The essential formalities are *mukadarsana*, and garlanding and *panigrahana*, tali-tying, presenting the bride with the wedding dress and ornaments, and feasting. There is no *homam* as among the Coorgs, but there exists the cutting of plantains in common with the Coorgs. On the arrival of the bride at the bridegroom's house, she puts rice on the lamp. On the third day they bathe, and celebrate the *sobhanaprasta*, if the girl has attained puberty already.

Pregnancy and Childbirth

When a girl becomes pregnant, *pumsavana* and *simantha* are performed. When she is about to become a mother, she is confined to a separate room. Her mother or some aged woman acts as midwife. Pollution lasts for eleven days after which she bathes to become pure. But it is only after 40 days that ganga puja is performed, when she bathes and becomes pure. Only then can she enter the kitchen. Cradling the baby takes place on the eleventh day. The naming ceremony takes place the same day.

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

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II. PART

The People of Coorg.

1. COMPOSITION AND DENSITY OF THE POPULATION OF COORG.

[10] [167] The country of Coorg has for ages been inhabited by various tribes, which, though not all of the same standing, are distinguished from other castes, that have immigrated at more recent periods from the surrounding countries.

[567] [162] The most ancient and important tribes, which for centuries have been in the relation of masters and slaves, are the Coorgs (Kodagas) and the Holeyas, who together form perhaps one-third of the whole population.

Classified according to their languages and relative rank, claimed by, or accorded to them in the present day, the following are the various tribes in Coorg:

563 **A.** Tribes who speak the peculiar Coorg language.

1. The *Coorgs* and *Amma Coorgs*, about whom more anon.

2. The *Eimbokalu* (contracted from eivattu-vokkalu i. e. 50 farmers). They are cultivators and in their mode of life, in dress, in superstition and festivals conform to the habits of the Coorgs, but the latter do not eat or intermarry with them. In bodily appearance and complexion they are not so well favoured as the Coorgs and are less spirited in manly pursuits. They came from Mysore in a body of 50, to settle down in Coorg, hence their name. In the Rajahs' time they worshipped

4: Richter M, G-5 (ca. 1856-1870) 1870 AW5 Coorg AW5

or 6000 armed men, has during the long period of peace and prosperity under the British Government considerably increased and may now be estimated at about 30,000 souls.

2. PERSONAL APPEARANCE, OCCUPATION AND GENERAL CHARACTER OF THE COORGS.

The Coorgs, or Kodagas as they are properly called, are the principal tribe of the country and from time immemorial the lords of the soil. For the last two centuries they are known as a compact body of mountaineers who resemble more a Scotch clan than a Hindu caste. In the Hindu scale they are Sudras and not pork-eating "Bastard Kchetrias," as some mocking Brahmins would have it; but it ought to be the pride of the Coorgs to discard the notion of caste altogether, which in fact does not apply to them, and to stand upon their own merits as "Kodagas", the remarkable mountain clan of Coorg. Reserving an enquiry into their origin for the historical part, I would only remark, that the Coorgs of the present day are as distinct from the Malayálam and Canarese people on the western coast, as they are from the Mysoreans in the north and east, though their peculiarities are to some extent allied to the habits of the one as well as to those of the other race, and even their language is but a mixture of the Dravidian tongues.

Look at a group of Coorgs of the better class by the side of some Mysoreans or people from the western coast. The difference is striking. The Coorgs are tall, muscular, broad chested, strong limbed and swift-footed. Men of 6 feet and above are not uncommon. Their features are regular, often distinguished by an aquiline nose and finely chiselled lips set off by a well trimmed mustache which in the "gala-mishe" terminates in a broad volute as worn by their Rajahs and men

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539 Kshétra (holy land); three gávuda (6 leagues) to the east of the western sea; to the south of Kanva Rishi's habitation. From east to west it measures 6 yójana (72 miles), from north to south 3 yójana (36 miles).

[101] The country has three names: the first, *Brahmakshétra*; the second, *Matsyadésha*; the third, *Kródadésha*. The origin of these names is as follows:—

a. When Brahma performed his pilgrimage over the world, i. e. India, he came to Sahyádri, where he saw a strange sight. A Nelli tree (Phyllanthus emblica) stood before him spreading a hundred boughs. As he looked at the tree, he beheld the form of Vishnu with shell, discus and club. The next moment, when he fixed his eye upon it, he saw nothing but a bare tree. Upon this Brahma worshipped Vishnu many days, pouring upon the tree out of his holy vessel water from the Virajá river. (This river is not to be found in modern geography; it runs beyond the seven seas, which surround the world). On this account the country, from which the holy river Kávéri springs, has been named Brahmakshétra.

b. Of the second name two accounts are given. There is a mountain called Halfinoon in this country, the bard says. Near it there is a holy spring. In it Vishnu took the form of a fish and worshipped Shiva. Shiva blessed the fish with immortality, and Vishnu gave the country the name of the Fish-country (Matsyadésha). The second account contains the root of Coorg tradition. Siddhártha the king of the renowned Matsyadésha, had four sons. They were learned, heroic, strong in battle. The first of them longed to rule his father's kingdom. The second was addicted to pleasure, and served his elder brother. The third had a turn for philosophy. The fourth, the most talented of the four, gave himself to ascetic exercises and visited all the Tírthas (places of holy water washing away sin), but he felt also a strong desire after dominion, and was fond of worldly pleasure. His name was

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174 stances, the nucleus of brahminical legends and Coorg traditions.

[101] The name "Coorg", which is a corruption of the native name "Kodagu" needs not the elaborate and forced derivation of the Kávéri-Purána however well it may have served its purpose to mystify the natives. "Kodi" means in the Coorg dialect a top or peak, and Kodagu in Canarese signifies the same, so that "Kodagu" is emphatically the *Mountainous country*.

[197] [791] We have seen that the Coorg language and the ante-brahminical demon- and ancestor-worship are rooted in the Dravidian stock; we need therefore not go beyond the Dravidian family, to seek the origin of the Coorgs. They are certainly not the offspring of the Kshetria Pándus, as some brahminised Coorgs would have it, for the Pándus had perished in the snows of the Himalayas centuries before the Coorgs through the Mahá Bhárata even heard of their existence. It is however not unlikely, that the Coorgs were somehow connected with the Pándya kingdom which flourished in the south of India perhaps in the fifth century before Christ; but the Mahá Bhárata Pándus have nothing to do with this Pándyan kingdom, whose rulers were not Kshetrias, but belonged to the agricultural class. Like the Nairs in [564] Malabar, the Bants and Tulu Gaudas in Canara and the [197] Vokkaligas and Gaudas of Nagara, the Coorgs are—in the 174 brahminical scale—Súdras. The original inhabitants of Coorg 167 were very likely a branch of the cognate South-Indian tribes, and their number may have been augmented by immigrants from the countries just named, who settled at various periods, perhaps under the pressure of national calamities, or attracted by the sheltering forests and fertile soil of Coorg. The now ruined fort Pálpáre five miles to the east of Ponapét in Kiggatnád, is said to have been built by the Béda- or hunter-tribe; the tradition of the Padinalknád Coorgs already na-

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[Information on the regional divisions of the Indian sub-continent will be found in Chapter XIII, 6: Spate AW1 India.]